

REMARKS

These remarks respond to the Office Action mailed December 16, 2004. Claims 10-20 have been canceled. New claims 21-36 have been added. Claims 1-9 and 21-36 are pending in the application. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the subject application.

A. Claims 1-9

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-9 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as obvious over U.S. Patent No. 6,578,013 to Davis in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,826,538 to Kalyan. Applicant requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejections in light of the following remarks.

Davis discloses a system and method of communicating between supplier and customer devices (Col. 1, lines 22-25). Davis is intended to provide a system for managing the upgrading of end user computers in which the supplier maintains information about compatibility between a customer's various computer systems and by maintaining records of configuration consistency between a customer's computing systems, as well as providing operational repairs and upgrades (Col. 1, lines 35-45). An objective of Davis is to place less reliance on human management in this process (Col. 1, lines 56-59).

Davis stores criteria under which a customer is authorized to purchase a physical item. (Col. 1, lines 65-67). The system will initiate a purchase process if the authorization criteria are met.

The Examiner quotes Col. 2, lines 41-46 of Davis as disclosing "creating and modifying data relating to components specific to that supplier."

Applicants do not take issue with the proposition that Davis does disclose a database which includes data relating to components. However, Davis fails to disclose "creating and modifying data relating to components specific to that supplier" as specifically recited in claim 1.

The Examiner also quotes Col. 7, lines 46-66 as disclosing "creating and modifying a plurality of component groups, each component group containing component identifiers for one or more of said components of similar type, creating and modifying one or more compatibility groups independently within each said components group".

However, Davis at Col. 7, lines 15-47 describes a database which includes the (human) end user name, the PC maker's serial number for the PC, the company asset number, employee job title, employee cost center, employee ranking, employee purchase limit, components in the PC, previous purchases, pending orders, list of permitted purchases by end user.

Thus, Davis fails to disclose a "component group containing component identifiers" as specifically recited in claim 1.

Moreover, Kaylan fails to remedy these deficiencies of Davis. Kaylan is directed to combining components in such a way as to optimize revenue. Kalyan fails to disclose component groups containing component identifiers.

The Examiner also quotes Davis at Col. 9, lines 7-34 as disclosing "receiving product identifiers created by an external source and assigning each product identifier to a compatibility group within each component group, such that each compatibility group includes one or more product identifiers representing products with similar compatibilities within respective component groups".

However, the data in Davis is not organized in the manner defined in the claims of the present invention. Allowing, for the sake of argument and without prejudice, that the PC maker's serial number can be equated with a vehicle chassis number or the product identifiers of the present invention, neither Davis nor Kaylan disclose organizing the PC serial number in compatibility groups as specifically recited in independent claims 1, 2, 4, 21 and 33.

Davis at Col. 9, lines 7-34 describes the process of determining if a customer is authorized to purchase at least one physical item, and then sending a list of items for which the customer is authorized to shop. Putting this in the context of the present invention, this would be the equivalent of sending a list of all components in response to the search criteria of a specified vehicle identification. Such an outcome would be impractical as there are many thousand components of a vehicle. Davis uses an authorization to purchase criteria to present a list of all "components" which the end user is authorized to purchase. As a consequence, this passage does not teach "creating and modifying a plurality of component groups" as recited in claim 1. Kalyan similarly fails to disclose creating and modifying a plurality of component groups.

A purpose of the claimed invention is to simplify the process of cross-correlating between a plurality of components and a plurality of vehicles (products) to identify a specific component within a group of components identified by generic type of components. Following the teaching of Davis, such a system would present all components identified as being compatible with the vehicle, without consideration for the generic type of component required. This would not satisfy this objective of the invention.

In relation to the Examiner's objection to claim 2, the Examiner cites Col. 7, lines 20-45 of Davis as disclosing "said suppliers exporting said data as modified to said administrator, consolidating said data portions received from said suppliers into said database". However, both Davis and Kalyan fail to disclose the steps of: creating product identifiers relating to products, and exporting said created product identifiers to said multiple suppliers; providing each supplier with tools for creating and modifying one or more compatibility groups independently within each said components group and for creating and modifying associations between component identifiers and compatibility groups; said suppliers receiving said exported product identifiers and assigning each product to a compatibility group, such that each compatibility group includes one or more product identifiers from which the "said data portions as modified" are created. All of these elements are specifically recited in claim 2 and are not present in either Davis or Kalyan.

With reference to the Examiner's rejection of claim 3, the Examiner cites Col. 6, lines 19-55 from Davis as disclosing assigning a product to an existing compatibility group, assigning the product to a new product group or assigning the product to an unassigned compatibility group. The passage cited by the Examiner merely discloses storing a record of various operations performed by supplier administrator. However, as mentioned previously, neither Davis nor Kalyan disclose compatibility groups as the term is used in claims 1-9. Thus, these claims are not obvious over Davis in view of Kaylan.

Claims 4-9 depend on patentable claims and are patentable for at least the reasons associated with the corresponding independent claims.

B. New Claims 21-36

New claims 21-36 have been added. It is respectfully submitted that the new claims are patentable over the cited prior art.

New independent claim 21 recites a method including establishing an association between a compatibility group and a component identifier.

A compatibility group, as described throughout the specification, contains information showing how a particular component is compatible with a product. The example given in paragraph 0054 states that in the field of automobile parts, a compatibility group may identify a set of components that fit a certain vehicle.

None of the cited prior art discloses compatibility groups of components or establishing an association between a compatibility group and a component identifier.

New independent claim 33 recites a method of building a database including providing tools to suppliers for creating compatibility groups and creating associations between product identifiers. As discussed above, the prior art fails to disclose the creation of compatibility groups.

New dependent claims 22-32 and 34-36 depend on new independent claims 21 and 33 and are patentable for at least the reasons discussed above in connection with these claims.

C. Conclusion

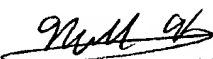
As it is believed that all of the rejections set forth in the Official Action have been fully met, favorable reconsideration and allowance are earnestly solicited.

If, however, for any reason the Examiner does not believe that such action can be taken at this time, it is respectfully requested that he telephone applicant's attorney at (908) 654-5000 in order to overcome any additional objections which he might have.

If there are any additional charges in connection with this requested amendment, the Examiner is authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 12-1095 therefor.

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Respectfully submitted,

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